

# BUSYBODIES

BY  
Marguerite Hurter

**CHARACTERS IN THE STORY**  
JANE RICHARDS, private secretary employed by  
ROBERTS, millionaire insurance man, who proposes to Jane after his divorce in which she has been innocently named. After his death, Jane continues to work in the office under the management of his son.

HARRY ROBERTS, a young waster, who has inherited the weak traits of his father. He is a playboy and a flirt, who asks that Jane marry him to fulfill his father's dying wish, but Jane is engaged to Norman Traverser, a popular novelist.

GERALD TRAVERSE, his brother, is a drug addict. Jane's mother nurses him.

Jane and Norman visit the studio apartment they have rented off Central Park West. A neighbor artist invites them to the artist's ball, where a golden apple is to be given to the most beautiful girl.

Traverser's studio neighbor, a French girl, asks that Jane sing and she sings her independence by doing so despite Traverser's objection and jealousy. She meets Harry Roberts and goes to the Ritz for tea.

A friend tells Traverser. He tries to reach Jane at her home, but she goes to dance at a Long Island road house with Roberts. There she meets Marchand, the French artist, and to keep him from telling Traverser, she takes tea with him the next day.

She is afraid to ride home with Harry and telephones Traverser who sends a car from Forest Hills to call her. Harry follows the limousine and she chauffeur and offers to take Jane to his car.

**INSTALLMENT NO. 54. HONEYMOON PLANS**  
"I'll take the young lady, I said," Harry repeated meaningfully to the chauffeur.

"Sorry, but here's your \$10. I can't be bothered to take any of your friends, I ain't!"

"Traverser," Harry cried. "Then he turned upon Jane in a fury. 'So you telephoned your lover, eh? Double-crossing me!'"

It was evident that Harry was beyond control—hateful only as whisky can make one.

Jane made an effort to speak, but he almost leaped upon her and tried to drag her into his car.

"I'll teach you to trifle with me!" he cried.

No sooner had he laid a finger on Jane than the colored chauffeur pounced upon him and circled him to the ditch.

At that moment some motorists stopped to inquire what was the trouble.

Jane was invited to ride to town with a very nice old lady and her husband, who took the chauffeur's charge. "She's going to No. 2 West 57th street. I have a flat tire. That gentleman what ain't a gentleman—in the ditch—was trying to bother her."

Jane sank into the friendly seat with relief. It was positively refreshing to be with this decent gray-haired couple after the people she had seen dancing with at the roadhouse and Harry Roberts in his intoxicated state. They drove her to the studio, where Norman was awaiting her with anxiety.

Without a word, Jane flew into his arms. He kissed her forehead and went to her room. "It was all my fault, dear," he said. "I don't blame you for going to Harry Roberts, but you ought to know him by now."

Tell your fortune, miss!" she coaxed.

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as he hung up the receiver. Then another thought struck Traverser. The artist might come into the studio there with him alone—at midnight!

"I think, dear, I shall call a taxi and drive you home," he said quickly as he returned to the alcove where she had been cuddling in the cushions of the den comforter.

"It's so comfortable and happy," Jane sighed.

Norman looked at her and thought she was the most fascinating creature he had ever dreamed of possessing, but he ought himself to temptation.

Jane's mother would be alarmed and expecting her home, and it would never do to be seen coming out of the building so late at night—together.

So Jane was hustled into her coat and with a final sweet kiss of parting, allowed Norman to drive her back to the apartment.

In the taxi Jane cuddled her head upon his shoulder, and was happy as a child.

"We shall hunt the costumes to-morrow," Norman promised. "And you shall meet me for tea at Sherry's if you like."

"Just happy," Jane sighed dreamily. Then she sat bolt upright. She remembered that she had promised to meet the Frenchman for tea at the Lorraine.

Simply to beg him not to expose her! So Jane was hurried to her room, where she confessed the truth and no longer feared the fellow. But what if he should make game of her promise?

Twice she began to explain it to Norman, but each time she settled back blissfully happy in his arms, and was afraid to disturb her peace.

"You are quiet," Norman said.

At home Mrs. Richards was waiting in anxiety. Harry Roberts had telephoned some strange tale of taking Jane to ride in the country and of her being kidnapped by a colored man, in a big, black limousine.

"What rot," Norman muttered.

Jane found it more difficult to satisfy her mother later, however.

"You should be careful! Remember even though your wedding is only a week away, there may be a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip!"

"I hate to hear of it," Jane said dully and went to bed without another word.

Next morning she slept late. No breakfast. She was weary and suffering the effects of her reckless night at the roadhouse.

"You look dissipated," her mother said, rather unkindly. "I hope you didn't drink anything. Roberts fellow would be apt to offer you."

"Mother, remember I have promised not to touch liquor! I nearly fainted out there, but—I wouldn't!"

Mrs. Roberts took Jane into her arms and wept joyfully.

# BURGESS BEDTIME STORIES

PETER RABBIT FINDS TEMPTATION  
By THORNTON W. BURGESS

Don't trifle with temptation, but promptly run away. Who stops to fight is apt to lose, and dearly must he pay.

It is bad, very bad, to have nothing in particular to do. Nothing leads to quite so much trouble as this. If everybody had something to do all the time and did it, most of the trouble in this world would vanish.

Old Mr. Temptation seldom wastes time with busy people. Old Mr. Temptation is twin brother to Old Mr. Trouble.

Peter Rabbit had nothing in particular to do. For that matter he seldom does have much to do. But at this season of the year he had less than usual. You see, he didn't have to hunt for food. There was plenty to eat close at hand. He didn't have to go more than a few steps from the dear Old Briar Patch to get all the sweet clover he could possibly eat.

In winter he had to hunt long and hard to keep his stomach full, and that gave him little time to get in mischief. But now it was very different. Already his babies were half-grown. The care of them he had always left largely to little Mrs. Peter anyway. So Peter was inclined to roam about and poke his wabby little nose into other people's business.

It happened that just as dusk, he was passing not far from Farmer Brown's garden. He hadn't been in that garden once since it was planted. Long ago he had made up his mind to keep away from there. But now as he was hopping along, he suddenly thought of that garden and began to wonder what was growing in it this year.

Now, this was just the opportunity Old Mr. Temptation had waited for. "Run over there and have a look," whispered Old Mr. Temptation.

Peter sat down. "No," said he most decidedly. "No, I'll keep away from the garden."

"Everything must be growing fine over there now," whispered Old Mr. Temptation. "I won't hurt anybody for you to go over there and look around. The young cabbages must be worth looking at now, not to mention the lettuce and other good things. Looking at them won't hurt them. A nice garden is always worth seeing. You are foolish not to have a look at it when you are so near. Run along over there just for a minute."

"No," said Peter again, though in

not quite so decided a way. "No, I won't go over there."

"Why not?" demanded Old Mr. Temptation. "You haven't anything in particular to do. You may as well go over there as to go up to the Old



"No!" said he most decidedly. "No, I'll keep away from the garden."

Orchard. Probably you'll find Old Mr. Toad over there, and you haven't seen Old Mr. Toad for a long time."

"I don't care," replied Peter. "I'm not going a step nearer that garden than I am this minute."

"Pooh!" cried Old Mr. Temptation. "Pooh! It will do you good just to see the things growing there. No one will know you have been there, so what is the harm?"

Peter sat up and looked longingly over toward that garden. Of course Old Mr. Temptation was right. Just as he was looking at those plants wouldn't hurt them. There wouldn't be the least bit of harm in hopping around through the garden as long as he didn't touch anything. He would like to see Old Mr. Toad. It was a long time since he had seen him, and he couldn't think of any one he would rather have a little gossip with. He hopped a few steps toward the garden and stopped again.

"Go along, go along!" whispered Old Mr. Temptation. "You know you always do enjoy a fine garden."

Peter shook his head, but it was not a very decided shake. "It wouldn't do any harm to just peek under the fence," thought he. "I will do that much."

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The next story: "Old Mr. Temptation Keeps Busy."

# ADVENTURES OF THE TWINS

BY OLIVE ROBERTS BARTON



Earth Children Cried: "Oh, There Goes a Comet."

Nancy and Nick heard someone talking. And as they turned to look, the Moon they came upon Comet-Legs and Mr. Peerbout.

Mr. Peerbout, the Moon-Man, was sitting on the star Comet-Legs usually reaching for it.

"Why don't you give me my star?" complained Comet-Legs.

"Humph!" exclaimed the Moon-Man. "Why do you want it?"

"To get away from this pesky place," said Comet-Legs.

"What. Don't you wish to be the Man-in-the-Moon any more?" asked Mr. Peerbout.

"No, I don't. Comet-Legs declared. 'I thought it would be an easy job, but I find you can't suit everybody. I gave 'em all sorts of Moons—didn't everything I know how and didn't know how, and small thanks I got. I've quit. Now please give me my star.'"

"Not so fast," said Mr. Peerbout. "Now you've had your way, I'm going to have mine. You've got to make some promises. First of all, will you go away and stay away?"

"Yes, sir," said Comet-Legs, with a wag of his head.

"And will you promise not to interfere with the nice dreams my dream-fairies take to the earth?"

"Yes, sir!" declared Comet-Legs again.

"And will you take all the Nuisance Parties you let out back to Blueberry Land—Jack Frost, Howdy Thunder, Jumpy Lightning, Dense Fog and all the others?"

"Yes, sir, I will!" promised Comet-Legs.

"All right! Then you may have your star."

Mr. Peerbout got off the star and

**BEGIN HERE TODAY**  
To escape hanging on the charge of sedition.

ANDRE-LOUIS MOREAU flees from his native town of Gavrilac and conceals his identity by joining a band of strolling players in which he makes a great success in the part of SCARAMOUCHE.

His flight has caused him to delay revenge on the great and powerful MARQUIS DE LA TOUR D'AZYR, who tricked Andre-Louis' dearest friend.

PHILIPPE DE VILMORIN, into a duel and then killed him because he feared the idealist's "dangerous gift of eloquence."

Over the dead body of his friend, Andre-Louis swore to carry on the work of reforming the lot of the down-trodden peasants.

Scaramouche, as he is now called, falls in love with CLIMENE, daughter of MONSIEUR BINET, the owner of the troupe. They become engaged and Andre-Louis has forgotten.

ALINE DE KERADICOT, the friend of his childhood, who horrified him by listening to the suit of the marquis. While walking with Climene, he unexpectedly meets ALINE.

**GO ON WITH THE STORY.**  
CHAPTER VIII  
The door, Aline commanded her footman, and "Mount here beside me," she commanded Andre-Louis, in the same breath.

"A moment, Aline." He turned to his companion, who was a maid, and to Harlequin and Columbine, who had that moment come up to shake it. "You permit me, Climene?" said he, breathlessly. But it was more a statement than a question. Harlequin will take care of you. Au revoir, at dinner."

With that he sprang into the cabriolet without waiting for a reply, and the regal equipage rolled away, leaving the three comedians staring after it, open-mouthed. Then Harlequin laughed.

"A prince in disguise, our Scaramouche!" said he.

The frown melted from Climene's brow. Resentment changed to bewilderment.

"Who is she?"

"His sister, of course," said Harlequin, quite definitely.

In the carriage Aline was considering Andre-Louis with grave eyes, lips slightly compressed, and a frown between her finely drawn eyebrows.

"You have taken to queer company, Andre," was the first thing she said to him. "Or else I am mistaken in thinking that your companion was Mile Binet of the Theatre Feydau."

"You are not mistaken. But I had not imagined Mile Binet was so famous already."

"Oh, as to that," mademoiselle shrugged. "It is simply that I was at the play last night."

"You were at the Feydau last night? And I never saw you!"

"Were you there, too?"

"Was I there?" he cried. Then he checked, and abruptly changed his tone. "Oh, yes, I was there," he said, as commonplace as he could, beset by a sudden impulse to avoid that

depths that she must account unworthy.

"I understand," said she, and compressed her lips a little more tightly. "But what do you understand?"

"The rare attractions of Mile Binet. Naturally you would be at the theatre. Do you know that you disappoint me, Andre? I was foolish enough to imagine you to be different, rather above such trivial pursuits. I conceived you something of an idealist."

"Sheer flattery."

"So I perceive. But you misled me. With your gift of acting I wonder that you haven't joined Mile Binet's troupe."

"I have," said he.

He saw first incredulity, then consternation, and lastly disgust overspread her face.

"Of course," said she, after a long pause, "that would have the advantage of bringing you closer to your charmer."

"That was only one of the inducements. There was another. Finding myself forced to choose between the stage and the gallows, I had the incredible weakness to prefer the former. Shall I stop at such trivial questions? Or shall I tell you how it happened?"

"Tell me how it happened first. Then we will decide."

He told her how he met the Binet troupe, and how the men of the marquis forced upon him the discovery that in its bosom he could hide safely until the hue and cry had died down. The explanation dissolved her frown.

"My poor Andre, why didn't you tell me this at first?"

"For one thing, you didn't give me time; for another, I feared to shock you with the spectacle of my degradation. What did you think of the play last night?" he continued.

"It was amusing and well conceived."

"Let me present you to the author."

"You? But the company is one of the Improvisers."

"Even improvisers require an author to write their scenarios. Soon I shall be writing plays in the modern manner."

"You deceive yourself, my poor Andre. The piece last night would have been nothing without the players. You are fortunate in your Scaramouche."

"In confidence—I present you to him."

He led her to the dressing room, where he found Scaramouche waiting for her.

"You—Scaramouche? You?" She turned to regard him fully. He smiled his close-lipped smile that made wrinkles like gashes in his cheeks. He nodded.

"And I didn't recognize you!"

"I thank you for the tribute. You imagined, of course, that I was a scene-shifter. And now the question I have been burning to ask. Why are you in Nantes, Aline?"

"I am on a visit to my aunt, Mme. de Sautron. She is receiving several guests today. M. de La Tour d'Azyr is to be one of them."

Andre-Louis frowned and sighed. "Did you ever hear, Aline, how poor Philippe de Vilmorin came by his end?"

"Yes; I was told, first by my uncle, then by M. de La Tour d'Azyr, himself."

"Did not that help you to decide this marriage question?"

"How could it? You don't expect me to judge between men in matters such as these?"

"If you cannot judge, it is that you do not wish to judge."

His tone became harsh. "Will you close your eyes to justice that might check the course of your unhealthy, unnatural ambition?"

"I think I had better let you alight so that you may go back to practice virtue and honor with your theatre wench."

"If you must speak of her at all," he interrupted, hotly, "you'll speak of her as my wife."

Amazement smothered her anger. Her pallor deepened. "My God!" she said, and looked at him in horror. And in horror she asked him presently: "You are married—married to that?"

"Not yet. But I shall be, soon. And let me tell you that this girl whom you visit with your ignorant contempt is as good and pure as you are, Aline. She has wit and talent which have placed her where she is, and which shall carry her a deal farther. And she has the womanliness to be guided by natural instincts in the selection of her mate."

"You will descend this instant!" she told him fiercely. "That you should dare to make a comparison between me and that!"

"And my wife-to-be," he interrupted, before she could speak the infamous word. He opened the door for himself without waiting for the footman, and leapt down. "My compliments," said he, furiously, "to the assassin you are to marry." He slammed the coachman. "Drive on," he bade the coachman.

He got back to the inn to find the company at table. Harlequin and Columbine had spread the tale of this scene in disguise caught up into the chariot of a princess and carried off by her; and it was a tale that had lost nothing in the telling.

Climene had been silent and thoughtful. Clearly her Scaramouche must be vastly other than he had hitherto appeared, or else that great lady and he would never have used such familiarity with each other. Imagining him no better than he was, Climene had made him her own. And now she was to receive the reward of disinterested affection.

Even old Binet's secret hostility toward Andre-Louis melted before this astounding revelation. He had pinched his daughter's ear quite playfully. "Ah, ah, trust you to have penetrated his disguise, my child!"

Her father offended her. Scaramouche was clearly a great gentleman, an eccentric if you please, but a man born. And she was to be his lady. Her father must learn to treat her differently.

She looked shyly—with a new shyness—at her lover when he came into the room where they were dining. He observed for the first time that proud carriage of the head, with the chin thrust forward, that was a trick of his, and she noticed with what grace he moved—the grace of one who in youth has had his dancing master and fencing master.

(Continued in Our Next Issue.)

# SCARAMOUCHE

by Rafael Sabatini

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